



Town of Wallingford, Connecticut
Department of Police Services

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Comments for the Public Safety & Security Committee

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Chief Douglas L. Dortenzio, Wallingford Police Department

Senator Larson, Representative Dargen, and members of the Public Safety & Security Committee, I write in support of **Proposed Senate Bill #260: An Act Creating A Short Form To Report A Motor Vehicle Accident.**

Until January 1st of this year, police departments throughout Connecticut utilized a standardized, comparatively simple two page (PR-1) form to record the details of a motor vehicle accident. The form was easy to understand and satisfied the needs of the motorists, their insurance carriers and the law enforcement community.

On January 1st, Connecticut implemented a twelve page successor document for the same purpose. Whereas the original form took about ten minutes to complete, this new lengthy document takes a police officer well familiar in the nuances of the form from forty to forty-five minutes to complete. If you are the unfortunate motorist who experiences the proverbial fender bender while enroute to work you are clearly annoyed at the police officer for the time it now takes to complete this new document so that you may proceed on your way.

A single police officer may only be expected to address a finite number of tasks in a given work day. This unnecessarily cumbersome form, an apparent quest to collect data which is of no use to either law enforcement or the criminal justice system, erodes the availability of a police officer to address more pressing community policing initiatives.

Along with the institution of this new form is a requirement that the document be submitted electronically and that the simple diagram associated with the previous form now be completed digitally using obscure software that serves no other purpose to a police department. Such requirements are hidden unfunded expenses to municipalities that must train their work force in the use of this software and continually acquire product updates which result in further training and purchasing expenses. Each time the state decides to unilaterally adjust this form, however subtly, each municipality bears a new expense with their respective records management software vendors to digitize the form for continued electronic use and data submission to the state.

I urge the committee to contact their local police chief to discuss and review this form. Assess for yourselves the time consumption required for proper completion of the form and the absurdity of some of the requirements. Recording the weather at the time of the accident despite the fact that the weather had no role in causing the accident is but one requirement. Providing the longitude and latitude of the accident is but another.

State and local government cost containment is a serious and protracted problem that requires thoughtful collaboration among the various stakeholders as well as the courage to act on one's convictions. However simple this issue may seem, it is a glaring representation of what has gone awry and an attractive starting point for much needed repair.